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Mr. *SHOWER's*  
**FAST-SERMON,**

*May 23, 1694*

ON

2 King. ix. 22. *And Joram said, Is it Peace, Jehu?*  
*And he answered, What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel, and her Witchcrafts are so many?*

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MONASTERY

THE MONASTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY  
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT  
IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE CAUCASUS

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No Peace to the Wicked.

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached on the  
FAST-DAY,

May 23, 1694.

Being the Day appointed by *Authority* for a General and Publick Fast in London and Westminster, &c. in most devout and solemn manner, to supplicate Almighty God for the Pardon of our Sins, and to implore his Blessing and Protection, in the Preservation of their Majesties Sacred Persons, and the Prosperity of their Arms at Land and Sea.

By JOHN SHOWER.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. D. and to be sold by John Lawrence, at the Angel in the Poultry. MDCXCIV.

Mo Peace to the World

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## No Peace to the Wicked.

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## FAST-SERMON.

Proving SIN to be an Enemy  
to all kind of Peace.

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2 KINGS ix. 22.

*And it came to pass when Joram saw Jehu, that he said,  
IS IT PEACE, JEHU? And he answered,  
WHAT PEACE, so long as the Whoredoms of thy  
Mother Jezebel, and her Witchcrafts are so many?*

**A**S soon as Jehu was anointed to be King of Israel, by one of the Sons of the Prophets, with a Commission Ver. 4. 5. from God, to extirpate the whole House of *Abab*, and to avenge the Blood of the Prophets, and of all the Servants of the Lord, that had been shed by Ver. 6, 7, 8. *Jezebel*, he immediately hastens to *Jezreel*, where was *Joram* the Son of *Abab*, to be recovered of the Wounds he had lately received from the *Syrians*; and with him was *Abaziah* King of *Judab*, who had married his Sister, and came thither to make him a Visit.

B

Upon

Upon the Approach of *Jehu*, and the Watchman's notice  
 Ver. 17. of it, King *Joram* dispatcheth an Horse-man to enquire the Reason of his coming, and to demand if all things were in Peace. He receives a short Answer, *What hast thou to do with PEACE? turn thou behind me.* A second Messenger has the

V. 18, 19. same Success. Upon which the two Kings hasten to their Chariot, as under a Divine Infatuation, to go out to meet *Jehu*, and his Company. The Detention of two Messengers, might have sufficiently alarm'd them to expect an Enemy: But such whom God intends to destroy, seldom suspect a Danger till it is too late. Upon the meeting of King *Joram* with *Jehu*, he asks the Question in the Text, *IS IT PEACE?* And receives the following Answer, *WHAT PEACE, so long as the Whoredoms and Witchcrafts of thy Mother Jezebel are so many?*

This *Joram* who asked the Question, was an idolatrous and wicked Prince, King of the ten Tribes of *Israel*; the wretched Son of two infamous Parents, *Ahab* and *Jezebel*.

There was another *Joram*, or *Jehoram*, King of *Judah*, the Son of good *Jehoshaphat*, who began not his Reign, till the fifth  
 2 Kings 8. Year of this *Joram* King of *Israel*. He was the Father of *Abaziah*,  
 16. who was now at *Jezreel* with King *Joram*: of him I shall have occasion to speak afterwards, as being slain with him.

*Jehu*, who makes the Answer to the Question in the Text, was the Captain of the Hosts of *Israel*, but by God's Command anointed to be King of *Israel*, with express Orders to root out the Family of *Ahab*, and execute the judgments of God on his whole House. And in the following part of the History we find he did so, with some Exactness as to the thing, tho not with that Integrity of Heart and Design as he ought to have done it; for he still cleaved to the Worship of the Calves at  
 2 King. 10. *Dan* and *Bethel*. The best of the Princes of *Israel* were of  
 31. such ill Characters, that of twenty of them we hardly read of one good; *Jehu* was one of the best, as *Ahab* the Father of this *Joram* was one of the worst. But *Jehu* is anointed by God, to destroy that wicked Family of *Ahab*; and upon his anointing he hastens to *Jezreel*, to accomplish it upon this King *Joram*, *Ahab's* Son. As soon as he sees him, he asks this Question, *IS IT PEACE, JEHU?*

For the Import of the Question, *Is it Peace?* or, *Is it well, Jehu?* as it might be rendred, and is so in other Verses; it is as  
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if he should have said, "Is there no bad News, *Jehu*, that occasions thy unexpected coming? What means this thy sudden and hasty Journey? Is the Army routed by the Syrians? Is *Hamath* recovered again? Is it Peace? Is there any new Rebellion or Conspiracy? What ill Tidings dost thou bring? Is it Peace, *Jehu*? There needed no stay for an Answer, the very Countenance of *Jehu* doubtless spoke Death to *Joram*; and his Tongue seconds it in the following Answer of the Text, *viz.*

And *Jehu* answered, *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel are so many? i. e.* "Thou speakest of Peace with Men, when, by thy impious Idolatry and Blood, thou and thy House have bid Defiance to Heaven, and made God thine Enemy. *What Peace, so long as Thou and thy Mother are in open Rebellion against God? What Peace, while Heaven has a Controversy with thee and thy Family, while the Wickedness of thy Mother Jezebel is avouched and entertained as thine own? What Peace, what kind of Peace dost thou look for? Or, how canst thou expect any? There is no Peace, there will be none, there can be none, it is in vain to imagine there shall be any. No, the Voice of thy Mother's Guilt has reached to Heaven, and awakened Divine Vengeance against thee and thine House: God will destroy that wicked Woman, Her and Hers, Root and Branch, as a Generation of Vipers. What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel, and her Witchcrafts are so many?*

By *Whoredoms* here we may understand Idolatry, which is often so called. And the Idolatry of the House of *Abab* has particularly that Name affixed to it, 2 Chron. 21. 13. where the other *Jehoram* is charged with making *Judah* to go a whooring, like to the Whoredoms of the House of *Abab*. I do not exclude literal Whoredom, and all other Uncleaness, which does sometimes precede, and usually accompany, or follow Idolatry, and false Worship.

And it is not improbable, but that by *Witchcraft* here the same is to be understood; the Worship of Idols being the Service of the Devil, and a kind of Compact with him, it is a sign that he hath powerfully bewitched and deceived the corrupt Minds of Men, and may well be called *Witchcraft*. Under one or both of these Crimes here mentioned, *Idolatry* is doubt-

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less to be understood; because that was the great Sin of *Jezebel*, for which *Jehu* was to execute Judgment, and it is not likely he would omit it in his Charge against her.

Our Modern Infidels, who deny any such thing as *Witches*, can take no Advantage of this Interpretation, because the comparing of *Idolatry* to *Witchcraft*, does suppose that there is such a thing as *Witchcraft*; and there are other places of Scripture that mention Death to be the Punishment of it.

What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of *thy Mother Jezebel*? &c. *Her Crimes* are mentioned, rather than *his*; partly, as they were more infamous and notorious; partly, as it was for her Sins, that God was now about to execute Judgment; and partly, as this *Joram* had been nursed up and educated in her cursed Idolatry, and so her Wickedness became his own: But especially are *her Crimes* taken notice of, to show that it was not a particular War with *Joram*, but with the whole Family; and that the Anger of God, which *Jehu* was to execute, was against the whole House of *Ahab* and *Jezebel*. Which is a sufficient Account why *Jehu* makes such a smart Answer to *Joram's* Question, *Is it Peace?* as this, *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel; and her Witchcrafts are so many?*

This therefore is the Sum of these Words as the Ground of my following Discourse, that there is no Peace to be expected by impenitent, unreformed Sinners. Or, That Sin is an Enemy to all kind of Peace. What Peace, so long as? &c. That I may confirm and improve this, let us, first, consider that there is a threefold Peace. First, Divine Peace, or Peace with God. Secondly, External and Civil Peace between Man and Man, and this in lesser and greater Societies. Thirdly, The Peace of the Soul, inward Peace, or Peace of Conscience. Now if we look above us, or round about us, or within us, there is no Peace to be had, while Sin is not repented of, and reformed:

In general, Peace is taken for all kind of Good, for all manner of Blessings, as sometimes for Spiritual Blessings. The Legacy of Christ is Peace, *My Peace I leave with you. In me you have Peace.* Sometimes for all Temporal Blessings. God threatens to take away PEACE from a People, even Loving-kindness and Mercies. Hence the ordinary Salutation, Peace be to such an one, or Peace be to such a House; that is, Blessing, Favour, Mercy. Now Sin, as the Cause of all Evil, is an Enemy to

John 14.

Ch. 15. 33.

Jer. 16. 5.

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to Peace in this Latitude, as it is that which separates between God and us, and hinders all good things from us. But let me speak more distinctly to these three kinds of Peace, *Peace with God, and Peace with Men, and Peace with Conscience.*

I. *Peace with God.* That Sin is an Enemy to this kind of Peace, I need not so much to prove, as to apply. You know it is the abominable thing which his Soul hates. That he is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity. That he is angry with the Wicked every day. That his Wrath is declared from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men. That on them he will rain Snakes, Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest. God hath no Enemy in the World but those which Sin makes him. The Wicked are represented in the holy Scriptures as Enemies to God, Fighters against him, Haters of him, &c. This Contrariety of Sin to God must needs make it obstruct our Peace with him. It is a walking contrary to God, it is a Contempt of him, a Rebellion against him, a bidding Defiance to him; and therefore, while Sin is unrepented of, God is our Enemy.

And of how dreadful Import is that to a considering Mind, to have God for our Enemy! For who knows the Power of his Wrath? Whose Heart can endure, or Hands be strong, if he engage against us! If he rise up against us, if he enter into Judgment with us! He is a consuming Fire, and we like Thorns and Briars, which he will go through and burn up. Whither shall we flee for Shelter, or seek for Refuge? And how fearful is it to fall into his Hands, who is the Almighty and Eternal Judge, the God to whom Vengeance belongs, when the time of his Patience and Long-suffering is over! How can you have a Moment's Rest, when God is apprehended to be your Enemy? How can you live merrily or in quiet for one Day or Hour, while you have no ground to apprehend the Breach is made up between him and you; while his destructive Vengeance hangs over your Heads, and is every moment read to fall on you, and crush you into everlasting Destruction; while, for ought you know, the next moment may for ever divide between you and all your Comforts, and all your Hopes; I say, *for ever.* O think of that little Word, *for ever*, Everlasting. You that are not reconciled and at Peace with God, by Repentance towards God, and Faith in the Blood of Jesus, and yet are content and careless,



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careless, think of this, and tremble. Don't make light of the Divine Threatnings, and despise that Wrath, that in a moment can destroy you. Let such think of it, who go on securely in some hidden course of Sin, upon the brink of Eternal Ruin. Spell me that Word EVERLASTING added to the *Wrath* of God, and tell me how many Syllables of *Time* go to the compounding of it. *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked*; but Indignation and Wrath, and a fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation. O consider it, believe it, apply it, while it is possible to make Peace with God, and escape his Righteous Vengeance.

II. Sin is an Enemy to Civil Peace between Man and Man. What else is the Original of Wars and Fightings, Confusions and Strifes, of all the Tumults and Disorders, Desolations and Confusions, in Human Societies; that Men are Wolves, and Bears, and Lions, and Tigers, and almost Devils to one another? What else is the great Make-bate of the World, that destroys the Peace, and disturbs the Order, defaces the Beauty, and obstructs the Happiness and Tranquillity of Families, and Churches, and Cities, and Nations? I might shew this in divers Particulars. As,

1. Some Sins, and some Lusts, have a direct Influence and Tendency to hinder and destroy *Civil Peace*; as Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Ambition, Wrath, Malice, Revenge, inordinate Passions, &c. 'Tis the Pride and Ambition of Princes that puts them upon enlarging their Territories, with the Destruction of their Neighbours: Tho they have many Pretences to colour their Ambition, Covetousness, Envy, or Revenge. The Defence or Promotion of true Religion is sometimes made a Cover for Violence, Rapine and Murder. How many thousands of *Indians* and Infidels have been massacred by the *Spaniards*, to make room for Christianity, and to plant the Gospel among them? And how much innocent Blood hath been shed in Christendom, to reduce Hereticks to the Unity of the Roman Church, or punish their Obstinacy or Apostacy who would not return to it? And this under the pretence of Religion and Conscience, and a Zeal for Truth, in Obedience to Christ's Vicar, to propagate the Faith of the Gospel, by a sort of Christians who think it their Duty to destroy all others, when and where

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where they are able to do it, if the Pope require and encourage it for the Catholick Cause. Ambition and Pride, ignorant Zeal, and Envy, Covetousness and Cruelty, are the Spring of those Disorders in the Christian World.

2. God has threatned, as the Punishment of Sin, to take away Civil Peace from a People: *Because thou hast rebelled against the Lord, saith the Prophet, there shall be Destruction upon Destruction. These things hast thou procured unto thy self, this is thy Wickedness; because it is bitter, it reacheth unto thy very Heart, &c.* For the Punishment of a particular People, God appoints the Sword, where he will, and as long as he pleaseth. *Against Ashkelon, and the Sea-shore, it is said, he hath appointed it; and therefore it shall not be quiet, the Sword shall not be put up into the Scabbard.* The like Passages you have in other Prophets, *O Assyrian, the Rod of mine Anger, the Staff in thy Hand is mine Indignation. I will send them against an Hypocritical Nation, against the People of my Wrath will I give them a Charge to devour and destroy.* The like is threatned by another Prophet; *Destruction cometh, and they shall seek Peace, and there shall come none: Mischief shall come upon Mischief; the Law shall perish from the Priest, and Counsel from the Ancients. The King shall mourn, and the Princes shall be clothed with Desolation, and the Hands of the People of the Land shall be troubled: I will do unto them after their way, and according to their Deserts will I judg them; and they shall know that I am the Lord.*

3. On the contrary, if Sin be repented of and forsaken, Civil Peace is the Matter of a Promise. *O that thou hadst hearkened to my Commandments! then had thy Peace been as a River, and thy Righteousness as the Waves of the Sea! But there is no Peace, saith the Lord, unto the Wicked.* If our Ways please the Lord, he has promised to make our Enemies to be at Peace with us. *All their Designs and Attempts, tho never so probable, never so formidable, shall be blasted by God's appearing for us.* *Associate your selves, and you shall be broken in pieces; Gird your selves, and you shall be broken in pieces; take Counsel together, and it shall come to naught: for God is with us.* The most insolent Invader shall have Orders to retreat from such a City, or shall not come nigh to such a Place. *Thou shalt not come before it with a Shield, or cast a Bank against it, or make a Trench, or shoot an Arrow, says God of the proud King of Assyria, the old Enemy*

Enemy of Jerusalem; For I will defend this City to save it, saith the Lord of Hosts. To the like purpose it is promised in several places of Scripture. My People, that obey my Voice, shall dwell in peaceable Habitations, and quiet resting Places: They shall dwell safely, and be quiet from the fear of Evil. Every one shall sit under his own Vine and Fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid. I will be their God, and I will make with them a Covenant of Peace; and they shall dwell safely in the Wilderness, and sleep in the Woods, &c. There are many such Promises of Peace to an obedient, reformed People.

4. The turning from Sin, besides the Promise of God to reward it, hath a natural, direct Influence in it self on the Peace and Welfare of any Country. For nothing would more promote the good of Human Society than a faithful Observation of the Laws of Christ. By the Rules of Christian Religion, God has provided for the Welfare of Mankind in all Capacities and Relations. If Men had the Wisdom to observe and follow what God hath mercifully directed and enjoined, the World would be blessed with Peace: Every Man's just Rights would then be preserved, in his Relations, Life, Liberty, Estate, Reputation, &c. For the Divine Commands are calculated to make a People happy; tho some of them are such as suppose the Corruption of Mankind to be so great, as that the Generality will not observe them. And even that is an Instance of the Divine Wisdom and Mercy.

We are under an Obligation to think of, and pursue whatsoever is True and Venerable, Just and Pure, Lovely, and of good Report; and to do Good to All, to have an obliging, condescending Carriage to All; and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men. This would prevent Contention, or quickly end it. But there can be no valuable or lasting Union among Men, without practical and serious Religion, especially without Humility and Christian Self-denial. For sinful Selfishness, which is the contrary to it, is the source of all Confusions and Quarrels; but Humility and Self-denial would bring Men to Peace and Concord: it would make us propose and prosecute the most excellent uniting Ends; and by conquering and curing the inordinate Love of Earthly Things, take away the great Occasions of most Quarrels. It would make Men follow after Peace, and value it, and the things that make for Peace. It would



would make them of a publick Spirit; and do what they can to promote the publick Welfare, and prefer it before their own private Interest; as *Mordecai, Nebemiah, David, &c.* But a selfish Man is his own End, and cares not what becomes of the Publick Good, so he thinks he can promote his own. Magistrates and Subjects could not live in Jealousies of one another, as having contradictory Interests, if the honouring and pleasing of God, and the common Good, were the principal End and Interest of both. Husbands and Wives, Brothers and Sisters, Masters and Servants, Neighbours and Acquaintance, if obedient to Christ, would not live at Variance with one another.

Esth. 10. 3.  
Neh. 1. 2.  
& 2. 3, 4.  
Psal. 137.  
5, 6.

*The Lust of the Flesh*, Sensuality and Luxury, have expos'd many Countries to the Desolations of War, and particular Persons and Families to Ruine. *The Lust of the Eyes*, or lusting after those things which Men see others enjoy, hath had the like Effects. *The Pride of Life* tends to Discord and Contention, which produce private Animosities and bloody Wars. But serious Godliness would keep the World in Peace, as forbidding these Sins, and mortifying these Lusts.

It would render Magistrates and Subjects mutual Blessings to one another, if they would mutually observe the Laws of Christ. It would make Princes and Rulers to be Just, and Gentle, and careful of their Subjects Good: it would oblige and animate them to preserve Right, encourage Vertue, and check and punish Wickedness. It would make Subjects Obedient, Loyal and Peaceable, paying due Honour and Tribute to Magistrates.

If our *Rulers* were Men fearing God, they would be *Ministers of God for Good*; Terrors only to Evil-doers, but a Praise to them that do well: They would then seek the Glory of God, and keep up his Authority, and prefer his Laws before their own: They would be Examples of Vertue and Religion in their publick Station, and so they would do much to draw others to Holiness, Unity, and Peace. Holiness in Magistrates would make them love those who are holy, and give them Encouragement, Countenance and Protection: It would make them hate Sin, and remove the Abominable Thing with which God is displeased: It would save them from the dangerous Temptations of their Riches, Power, and Advancement. Authority and Holiness together would make them highly esteem'd

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esteem'd and honour'd, as bearing the Image of the Heavenly Majesty and Goodness. The like for *Subjects* in the faithful discharge of their Duty: The Fear of God, and Obedience to him, is proper to make Men the best Subjects; thereby we are obliged to honour and obey our Rulers, as the Officers of God. This would make us understand the Blessing of Civil Government, and the Advantage of Protection by it. It would make Men true to their Oaths and Obligations, and dispose them to Unity, and keep them from seeking their own things against the publick Welfare. It would establish the mutual Obligations of Governours and Governed by the firm Bands of Conscience, and so prevent Violence and Oppression on the one hand, Faction and Murmuring on the other: and while every one hath his due, Order, Peace and Safety would be established.

In short, Consider the Gospel-Rules of Charity, Righteousness and Equity; of loving our Neighbour as our selves; of doing to others, as in the like case we would desire they should do to us: How would these promote the Peace and Welfare of Societies? The like might be said of the Precepts of Contentment, Meekness, Patience, Sincerity, Plain-heartedness, Benignity and Kindness, Compassion and Tenderness, Inoffensiveness, diffusive impartial Goodness, and readiness to do Good to all as we have opportunity; Forbearance of one another in Love; mutual Forgiveness; not seeking Revenge, or repaying one Injury or Ill-turn with another, but doing Good for Evil, and praying for them that hate and curse us; not meddling with other Mens Matters, but minding every one his own Business, &c. These and the like Commands and Rules of the Gospel tend directly in their own Nature to the Peace and Happiness of Civil Society. So that Sin, in its own Nature and Tendency, as well as by the righteous Judgment of God, is an Enemy to *Civil Peace*.

All the unbecoming Heats and Janglings, Strifes and Persecutions among Christians, all the uncharitable Fewds, Contentions, and Hatred among Neighbours, are from the Lusts of Men. This is one Instance of the present *Corruption* and *Reproof* of Sin: Did we but observe the Orders of Christ, and follow the Gospel-Rule, with how different a Face would the World appear? How happy would be the Nation, the City, the  
Family,

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Family, where the case were thus? But what Contentions and Enmities are caused every day by *Pride*, *Drunkenness*, and *Evil-speaking*? in every Town, Village, and Neighbourhood, we might find Instances. Were it not for the Corruption of Mankind, and the sad Effects of that, there were no Foundation in any sense to call *the State of Nature the State of War*. The Peace and Harmony, and consequent Happiness of the World had not been destroy'd, but by the Sin of Man. What Nation was ever set on fire within it self, or made desolate by a Foreign Power; what Battel was ever fought, (much less a Duel;) what War was ever commenc'd, or prosecuted, but on one side or both, *Ambition* or *Pride*, *Rashness* or *Rebellion*, *Fury* or *Revenge* was at the bottom? Hence they spring as from their grand *Source*, by these were they cherish'd as by their proper *Fuel*. The great *Convulsions* and *Desolations* that tear *Provinces* and *Empires*, and destroy *Kingdoms*, are caused by *Armies of Iniquities* rather than of *Souldiers*. Discord, Con-  
Prov. 13.  
10.  
Psal. 37. 11  
 tention and War, are the Scum of *Pride*. Whereas *the Meek shall inherit the Earth*, and be delighted with *multitudes of Peace*. Among the sinless *Angels*, tho there be many *Legions*, we read of no *Wars*. The *Earth* only is the Seat of *War*; *Jerusalem* above is free. If Men would cease to do evil, and learn to do well, *Spears* would be turned into *Plow-shares*, and *Swords* into *Pruning-books*. And the *Inhabitants of the Earth* would learn *War* no more, did they once forbear to be wicked. *Princes* would not oppress and murder their *Subjects*; nor would *Subjects* rebel against their lawful *Sovereigns*. A blessed universal *Peace* would return to the *Earth*, which is now such a Stranger to so great a part of the World. So that the *Reproof* and *Correction of Sin*, thundring in our Ears by the noise of *Canon*, and the Instruments of War, is as loud as the beating of *Drums*, and the sound of *Trumpets*: it should pierce our Hearts, as do the last *Cries* of mangled *Souldiers*; and affect us in a like sort, as do the Tragical Effects of a lasting War.

III. There is another kind of *Peace* which is *inward*, or *Peace of Conscience*. And as no Peace with God or Man can on good grounds be expected, while Sin is unrepented of; so nor Peace with our selves. 'Tis by the Faith and Obedience of the Gospel, that the Understanding, Will, and Conscience are

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made to agree, and have a peaceful Harmony in the same Subject. 'Tis by resigning our Judgments to the Divine Wisdom, and our Hearts and Affections to the Divine Will in his Word and Providence, that we must attain and keep inward Security and Peace. 'Tis by Uprightness and Sincerity, in contradiction to Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, that our Hearts are fixed and established, and the Tranquillity of the Soul maintain'd in all Conditions.

It is true; through the Deceitfulness of Sin, through the Pleasures and Diversions of this World, through the Blindness and Security and Hardness of Mens Hearts, the Influence of Satan, and oftentimes the righteous Judgment of God, Multitudes do speak Peace to themselves in a course of Sin, in a way that is not good: But this Peace is their Disease, it is no better than Stupidity, it is the Insensibility of a Man in a Lethargy; and if it be joined with sensual Mirth, it is the Jollity of a Mad-Man. For true Peace of Conscience cannot consist with Sin not repented of, and not forsaken. For the Proof of this, consider,

1. There is *no Foundation* for any such Peace. After all their bold Atheistical Talk, they cannot disbelieve there is a God that made and governs the World, to whom they must be accountable: They cannot extinguish the differences of Good and Evil in their own Minds: They cannot have that inward Calmness and Peace, after great Provocations, as after resisting Temptation, and doing those things which Conscience approves: They cannot but apprehend that there *will*, or at least *may* be a future Judgment: they cannot be persuaded, that God takes no notice of their Sins; or that tho' Conscience condemn for them now, God will not punish hereafter. These things they find when they durst be so bold to think of Death, and the final Judgment of God, and of passing into an everlasting State, which ordinarily they think of as seldom as they can. At such a time their Peace is disturbed, and they ready to sink under the Fears of an After-reckoning. This is ordinarily true, except of those who are stupified and hardened, so as to be past feeling; which is not the Case of all, nor is it presently the Case of any. But *great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.* This cannot be said of others, whose brutish Sensualities, and flashy Joys, which they call

call Pleasure, are tinctur'd with Uneasiness, and end in Sorrow. They have Care, and Fear, and Trouble, and Weariness and Regret; and do those things daily, which must make them unsatisfied with themselves when they come to review them. But the good Man hath the promise of having his Desires granted and fulfilled; and while he walks uprightly, may expect things will proceed fairly, orderly, sweetly, and with Delight: he hath the ground however of inward Satisfaction.

2: The most of such, who live under the Ministry of the Gospel, and yet continue in Sin, do act against their own Light, and the Dictates of Conscience; they live in a Contradiction to what they know they ought to be and do, and therefore can have no inward Peace. Conscience tells thee that this thy Course is not pleasing to God, that this is not according to Scripture-Rule; that thou must leave thy vain Company, and redeem thy Time, and live no longer in the neglect of Prayer; that thou must repent of Sin, and endeavour to make thy Peace with God, and prepare for another World, and be in a readiness for a sudden Death: Thy Conscience tells thee thou must do so, and therefore while you live in a neglect of this, and in a contrary Course, you are self-condemned.

And how many such are there, who from Morning to Night are under the Convictions and Condemnations of an accusing Conscience; but yet are held in the Chains of some Sin, so that their Lusts prevail against their Convictions. You know you ought to worship God in private and publick; that you ought to acknowledg him in all your Ways, and make it your Business to please and glorify him, tho you do it not. You know you ought to avoid evil Company, tho you continue to frequent it: You know that Drunkenness is a Sin, and Uncleanneſs a Sin; and Oppression, Covetousness, Injustice, Theft, Over-reaching, Treachery, Perjury, &c. are Sins. You know for such Sins the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven: You know your Guilt, you know you have not repented, you know you are not fit to die; you know you ought to turn to God, and seek his Favour, lest you be surprized by a sudden Death: but your Lusts are too strong for your Light.

I wonder not that such Persons cannot bear Retirement, that they do not love to be *Alone* for serious Consideration; nay, that they are afraid of waking in the Night; and for that very Reason



Reason some of them have confessed they usually drink more freely in the Evening, than otherwise they would do, that they may sleep soundly, to prevent the Uneasiness of their own Thoughts, in case they should not sleep: As some Malefactors will make themselves drunk when they are to be executed, that Death may not be terrible; which is a Medicine against Repentance, not against Hell. By some such Methods Men may in part keep off the feeling of their Misery, till the hope of Cure and Relief be past. But what a sort of Peace is this? For if they awake in the Night, their Conscience is awake: And the Light of Conscience doth not only shine, but burn and scorch them even at Midnight. Some of those who pretend to be above such Fears, notwithstanding all their Hectoring, and Damning, and Blasphemy, and Railing, are followed with bitter Reflections of Conscience, and are often filled with Horror and Astonishment, from the Gripes and Terrors of a guilty Mind, as divers have afterward acknowledged, tho Inconsideration, sensual Pleasures, and the hope of Death being at a good distance, kept them from such constant Fears in Health.

3. The Rage of some impetuous Lusts, and the Violence of sinful Passions, is manifestly inconsistent with inward Peace. 'Tis from Lust and Luxury, from Pride and Envy, from Malice and Spite, from Ambition and Covetousness, and such Dispositions, which the Grace of the Gospel is design'd to cure, and Christianity condemns, that Men cannot enjoy inward Peace and Tranquillity. While their Passions run violently and wildly towards the basest or meanest Objects, they must needs be punish'd with inward Uneasiness, Remorse, and Dissatisfaction. *They travel with Iniquity, and conceive Mischief*; they are in as great Pain almost as a Woman in Travail; and all to bring forth a Lie; Psal. 7. 14. One burns with impatient Lust, which is its own Torment; another eats out his Heart with Envy or Malice; another is even choak'd to Death with Thirst after Money, and is sick and in pain because he cannot reach the Estate he covets. Tho the more he gets, the more he thinks is yet necessary ere he can be happy and at rest: his Fever is still growing. Not to mention the Extravagancies of Lusts and Passions, there is nothing almost so ridiculous and absurd, brutish and abominable, but the Violence of sinful Passions hath brought

brought Men to. The outward Disorder and Folly of their Actions, show the inward Disturbance and Discomposure of their Minds.

To this purpose saith the Prophet, that the *Wicked are like the troubled Sea that cannot rest, that is always casting out Mire and Dirt.* They are hurried, and torn, and set upon the Rack, by the Violence of various Lusts: Their eager Desires of gratifying some, and the Fears of Disappointment in others, and the Dread of Discovery at other times, and the continual Fears of Punishment afterwards in most cases, must needs destroy the inward Peace of such Mens Minds. But he that walks according to the Rule of the Gospel, needs not be at all this Pains to prevent Disappointment, or Shame, to guard himself, and suspect every body, to curb his Tongue, and watch his Memory, and manage his very Looks and Gestures, to obviate other Mens Jealousies, or contrary Designs, and to prevent the Discovery of his own Intentions, or secret Actions. And I might add, that the Contrariety and Inconsistency of some Lust, doth also hinder inward Peace; as while Covetousness makes a Man toil and labour to scrape together and hoard up, his Pride and Vain-glory prompts him to spend and scatter, that he may not be out-done by his Neighbours.

4. In Adversity and Affliction, in bodily Sickness, or the prospect of Death, we then find what an Enemy *Sin* is to inward Peace. Then Conscience begins to awake in most Men; then, when they think of passing from one World to another, they are restless and uneasy, and afraid of every thing, and of nothing more than *Dying*; then their haughty Spirits are brought down, and they now tremble and talk at another rate, and will suffer a Minister, or a serious Christian to discourse freely with them, whose Reproof or Presence before they would not bear.

5. God doth sometimes in this World punish Sin with terrible Rebukes and Terrors of Conscience. He makes them possess their former Iniquities, he sets their Sins in order before them, he awakens Conscience to do its Office as a *Witness*, and a *Judge*, and in some respects an *Executioner* too: So that they accuse, condemn, and torment themselves. How many careless profligate Sinners, after great Transgressions; and how many;

many good Men, after great Backslidings, have experienced these Terrors and Rebukes of Conscience?

Believe it, Sinner, whoever thou art, one Sin set home on the Conscience with the Frowns of God, will sting the Soul as with fiery Scorpions; it will rend thy Heart with the most desperate Rage, it will make thy Lips quiver, thy Knees tremble, thy Bones rot, thy Spirit to fail within thee; it will make thee apprehend all the Miseries and Torments threatned in Scripture belong to thee: it will make thee cry out, "I am feeble and sore broken, mine Iniquities are a Burden too heavy for me! O how shall I appear before God! How shall I flee from his Presence, or bear his Wrath! O that I had never sinn'd, O that I had never been! O that I might cease to be! How much better if I had never been born, never seen the Light! Lord! if I should now die, what would become of me? and if I should yet live, will the Lord ever be merciful to me? The Sins I have committed are numberless and hainous, the Wrath I feel is unexpressible; that which I fear is Infinite and Endless! Lord! I see if I live I am an undone, accursed Creature! and if I die, (O let me not die) I fear I shall be for ever a damned miserable Sinner! Is there no Mercy, Lord! no hope for such a Wretch as I have been! And in such cases all the Pleasures and Diversions, the Riches and Honours of the World will signify little, they are Physicians of no value, you can taste no Sweetness in them; they can give no Rest to thy disturbed Thoughts, they cannot calm thine accusing Conscience: God alone can create the Fruit of the Lips, *Peace, Peace*: Men and Angels are not competent Chyrurgions for such a wounded Spirit. *If God speak Trouble, who can speak Peace?* Ministers and Friends may repeat the Promises of Mercy and of Grace, but all in vain, until God bind up the broken in Heart: He alone that removes the Guilt of Sin by pardoning Mercy, can remove the despairing Sense of it by speaking Peace. Now consider this, *Ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!*

The Improvement of this Discourse may be for *Instruction, Reproof, and Exhortation*. There are several things we may learn for our *Instruction*: as,



1. *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel? &c.* Observe, that it is the Wickedness of Men, (especially of Persons in great Places) is the true Cause of Wars, and publick Calamities. Nothing more common than to charge the publick Calamities of a Country upon Religion, and the Professors of it, as *Abab* did the Famine in *Samaria*, and his Son *Joram* likewise, on the Prophet *Elisha*. But his Answer will serve in both Cases; when he taxes him as the Troubler of *Israel*, he reply'd, *It is Thou and thy Father's House that have troubled Israel, in that you have forsaken the Commandment of the Lord, and followed Baalim*, 1 *Kings* 18. 17, 18. You may as well say, that Health is the Cause of Sickness, as charge Wars and Contentions, and publick Calamities upon serious Godliness. It is from the Lusts of Men, from the Wickedness of Magistrates and Subjects, that either obstruct the Peace of a People amongst themselves, or provoke God to take it away by desolating Wars. Religion is not to be blamed for any such Miscarriages of Christians, as disturb the publick Peace. You do not condemn the Laws of the Land, because Thieves and Murderers break them: The Laws are good, and oblige to nothing but what is good, tho ill Men will not observe them. So is it with the Laws and Precepts of Christian Religion. So far as real Christianity prevails, it will influence the Hearts and Lives of Men for the Good of every Society whereof they are Members. Christians acting according to the Laws of Christ, will honour their Rulers on God's Account, as his Officers: They know they obey God in obeying them, and so will do it for Conscience sake; because of his Authority whereof they partake, and of his Command to be in Subjection to them. Therefore so far as they fail in their Duty, by Faction and Rebellion, &c. they forsake their Rule, and offend their Heavenly Lord and Master. And it is not owing to their Godliness and Christianity, but to the want of it.

2. *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel, and the Crimes of the Family of Abab, are so many?* Observe, that the Sins of Courts do sometimes bring Judgment on the whole Land. The People were punished with a dreadful Pestilence for *David's* Sin in numbring the People, 2 *Sam.* 24. 17. And he acknowledged and said, *Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these Sheep, what have they done? Let thine Hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my Father's House.* God turned

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turned not away his Anger from *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, notwithstanding the Reformation of *Josiah*, for the Sin of his Grandfather *Manasses*, and his Father *Amnon*, 2 Kings 23. 25, 26. tho there was no King before him that turned to the Lord with all his Heart; and with all his Soul, and with all his Might, according to all the Law of *Moses*; neither after him arose there any like him: Nevertheless the Lord turned not from the Fierceness of his great Wrath, wherewith his Anger was kindled against *Judah*, because of all the Provocations that *Manasseh* had provoked him withal. *And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel; and will cast off this City Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the House of which I said, My Name shall be there.* Therefore in the Confession of National Sins, we must look further back than the present Reign, lest the Guilt of former Princes bring Judgment on the Nation.

So the Sin of *Saul* brought three Years Famine upon the Land, till Judgment was executed, and God's Anger turned away. Thus *Israel* was here punished for the Wickedness of *Abab*, *Jezebel*, and *Joram*. And doubtless their Example had infected the People too. *My Anger*, says God, *was kindled against the Shepherds, and I smote the Goats*; Zech. 10. 3. that is, against the Officers in Church and State, who were the Ring-leaders in Sin; and the Community suffered upon that Account, the People were smitten. What reason have we to pray for holy Magistrates, and to bless God when we have such?

3. *What Peace to thee, O Joram, while the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel?* &c. Observe, that Children may be punished for the Sins of their immediate Parents; and if they continue to commit the like, they may expect it to the third and fourth Generation. Wicked Parents little consider how cruel they are to their Children, by entailing the Curse of God upon them, and leaving them Heirs of his Judgment and Wrath, as their Inheritance. We find *Naboth's* Blood that was shed by *Joram's* Father, is mentioned to him his Son, and thrown in his Dish. The Prophet *Elisha* scruples not to call him the Son of a Murderer, 2 Kings 6. 32. And it is remarkable, that his dead Body is cast into the same Plat of Ground, where *Naboth's* Blood, it is probable, had been spilt, Ver. 25, 26. of this Chapter. That very Ground is manured by the Blood of *Abab's* Wife and Son, where Dogs licked the Blood of *Naboth*, who was murdered by *Abab's* Order.

4. *What*

4. *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms of thy Mother Jezebel? &c.* We may learn how dangerous it is to be related to a wicked Family, with which God is angry. For these words are spoken to *Joram*, who was not so bad as his Father *Abah*, and whose Wickedness was inferiour to that of his Mother *Jezebel*: For it is said of him, *tho he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, yet not like his Father or Mother*, 2 Kings 3. 2. and yet you see the Issue by this Text. Let Parents remember this, and younger Persons who are not enter'd into a married Relation. It is a bold and dangerous thing to match into a wicked Family, to be in their Company, and to be of their Kindred. For King *Abaziah*, who was now with *Joram*, he was slain too. Tho he were the Son of good *Jehosaphat*, yet he married the Daughter of *Jezebel*, and thereby was brought to walk in the Ways of *Abah*; and he also was destroyed, 2 Kings 8. 18. compared with 2 Chron. 21. 5. and 12. 13.

It is dangerous in respect of *Sin*, lest we be infected; and it is dangerous in respect of *Judgment*, lest we share in their Plagues: For all the seventy Sons of wicked *Abah* were cut off, as we read in the next Chapter, 2 Kings 10. For the Sins of *Jeroboam* God cut off all the Remnant of his House and Family, 1 Kings 15. 30. And all the Kindred, and Children, and Friends of *Baasha* died for his Iniquity, 1 Kings 16. It is so ordinary for the Branches of a wicked Family to share in Punishment with the Heads of it, that the Spirit of God takes notice of it, as an unusual and extraordinary thing, if it fell out otherwise, Numb. 26. 10, 11. *The Earth opened and swallowed up Korah and his Company*; and it is added, as deserving to be particularly taken notice of, that *notwithstanding this, the Children of Korah died not*.

5. *What Peace, Joram, while thine and thy Mother's Sins make God thine Enemy?* We may learn, that the Peace, Safety, and Happiness of a People depend upon the Favour and Protection of God. Some of the Heathens have had some Apprehension of this, that the Presence of their Gods would do more for their Defence, than all their Fortifications, or Soldiers: And therefore when they went to War against any People, they used several Methods, which they thought were likely to get the Gods of such or such a City out from amongst them; or they endeavoured, sometimes by Bribes and Presents, and sometimes by Incantments, to gain them over to their side.

A very little Observation from History and Experience will confirm it, that in Matters of War and Peace, the Hand of God is chiefly to be regarded: His Providence is most remarkable in the Management and Success of National Revolutions. The *Canaanites* had their Hearts hardened, that they did not seek after Peace, would not make Peace with *Israel*. *This came of the Lord*, to the intent they might be utterly destroyed; *Josh. 11. 20.* At other times he girds with Strength for War, he musters the Horse to the Battel, he breaketh the Bows, and burns the Chariots, and cuts the Spears in sunder, and determines the Success of National Wars. It is the *Sword of the Lord*, and of Gideon that must secure the Victory. The latter without the former will prove a wooden Dagger, and do no Execution. But if God be on our side, we need not fear when Men rise up against us. Hence it sometimes comes to pass, that mighty Armies have been blasted by Divine Providence, been ruined we know not how, falling as it were by their own Strength, withered and come to nothing by a secret Curse of God: great Politicians fooled, firm Alliances strangely broken, resolute Commanders disappointed, sometimes fearing where no Ground of Fear was, sometimes as resolute and fool-hardy against all Reason, to their own Destruction. Our Age is not without Instances of this.

6. We may not then wonder, if *this War* is not honourably and speedily ended. It should not be thought strange, if God should not give Peace in our Days; if he should not establish and settle us by a speedy, honourable, and gracious Issue of the present War. For what Peace can we expect, while the bare-faced Impieties and Provocations of our Age and Nation, in Court, City, and Country, in Fleet and Army, are so many; when there is so little Appearance of *Reformation*, and all Attempts for it meet with such Opposition? It is rather a Wonder, that we remain escaped at this day, and enjoy so many of the Blessings of Peace, while other Countries feel worse Effects of a Lasting War. We may rather sit down and wonder, that, after so long a time, of God's Forbearance, after so many Trials as he has given us, after so many slighted Warnings, after such strange Methods of Divine Providence, as we have had to awaken us, that yet, though *unreformed*, we are *not destroyed*. For all our former Judgments have not humbled us, or united us: Our late Mercies have not made us thankful: The most astonishing Appearances of God among us have not wrought a Cure; We are impenitent,

nitent, and divided, and stiff-necked still. We complain sometimes that Poverty is coming on us like an armed Man: but we consider not the National Sins, or our own in particular, whereby God is provoked. Is it then any Wonder, that the Sword is not put up into its Scabbard, when the Case is thus with us, as to the Generality of the Nation, and so few Exceptions are to be made?

II. There are several things also observable from this History of *Joram* and *Jezebel*, which may hereupon afford Matter of *Reproof*, with respect to several Transgressions amongst us of the like kind. Not only as the Openness, and Boldness, and Impudence in Sin, under which the Land groans, is parallel with the Case of *Israel* at this time: But there are other Instances observable from this History; As,

1. Doth not *Spiritual Wboredom* and *Carnal* abound, and the latter too much unpunished? Though open and avowed *Idolatry*, we may thank God, is not tolerated amongst us, as a few Years since: Yet Covetousness and Worldliness are also called *Idolatry*; and by Luxury and Intemperance Men make their Belly their God. And for carnal Whoredoms, the Impurities of the Flesh, and the Lusts of Uncleaness, and that which contributes to them, Luxury and intemperate Drinking. No Time or Place can be named since the Reformation, wherein these Sins ever prevailed to that Degree, or rose to that shameless Height, as of late Years in these Islands: and this under Gospel-Light to confront it: Which is an high Aggravation, it being the great Design of the Knowledge of Christ by the Gospel, to help our Escape from these worldly Pollutions. Wo be to such a People; whose Magistrates connive at such Offences, and *overpass the Deeds of the Wicked!* Shall I not visit for these things? Shall I not be avenged on such a Nation, saith the Lord? Jer. 5. 28, 29.

I cannot but acknowledg with Thankfulness to God, and to the just Honour of the Magistrates of this City, that there hath been much done *this last Year*, to suppress and punish these and other scandalous Crimes. But what Opposition and Discouragement have they met with, (Inferiour Officers especially) in their Endeavours of Reformation? How hath the Attempt been ridicul'd? and their worthy Zeal been mis-interpreted, nicknamed, and reviled? How few have done what they might and ought, to strengthen their hands? How backward are the Gene-  
rality;



reality even of good Men, to assist the Magistrate by giving notice of the Guilty, that they may be punish'd? Though they know there are such in Commission, as would be a Terror to Evil-doers, and not bear the Sword of Justice in vain.

Jer. 23. 10. Few have the Heart, or Courage, or Honesty, to endeavour the Punishment and Suppression of Debauchery and Prophaneness, though the Instances be such as pollute the Land, and make it mourn. They think it beneath 'em as Gentlemen, or Citizens, or Neighbours, to be any way concerned. But ought not every one to do what he can, to prevent and purge out Wickedness from the City and Nation, by endeavouring the exemplary Punishment of notorious Offenders? Is it not by this means, that the fierce Anger of the Lord, kindled against a People, is to be turned away, Numb. 25. 3, 4, 11. And from themselves too. If a Soul sin, and bear the Voice of Swearing, and is a Witness of it, whether he hath seen or known of it, if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his Iniquity. Levit. 5. 1. and 24. 14. He that beareth Cursing, and bewrayeth it not, is Partner in the Sin; Prov. 29. 24. And they shall share in the Punishment of such Sins. It is reckoned among the Iniquities that separate between a People and their God, and cause him to hide his Face, that none calleth for Justice, nor any pleadeth for Truth, Isai. 59. 2, 4. Thanks be to God, there be some Gentlemen and others, though of different Perswasions in some lesser Matters of Religion, who yet heartily agree in a Publick Spirit as to these things: To these the City and Nation are obliged, and God I hope will reward them, and increase their number. But if private Persons, in their several Places, would have done what they could to assist the Magistrate in this Work of Reformation, where one Malefactor of either Sex hath been punish'd this last Year, there might have been twenty. And so good a Beginning this Year, might probably have been carried so far, as that not only succeeding Magistrates would find it less difficult to carry it further; but obtain likewise, that other Towns and Cities throughout the Nation might imitate their Example, with the like good Success.

2. Are not many Parents amongst us too much like Jezebel in bringing up their Children; in educating them in Rebellion against God, in Pride, and Vanity, and fleshly Lusts, instead of endeavouring to save them from these? How little care is there in most Families to instruct, reprove, and admonish Inferiours; or use the Authority God hath given Parents to restrain their Children

Children from Sin? So shameful is the Neglect of Parents in this kind, that it abates our Wonder to find so many Complaints of wicked disobedient Children: for Parents themselves are greatly accessory to the Wickedness and Ruine of their own Children. How little is done by them, to save them from the Sin of Pride, to antidote them against the Impurities of the World? How seldom do they put them upon secret Prayer, and reading the H. Scripture and other good Books, as soon as capable? How little care to teach them the strict Observation of the Lord's Day, by their Counsels, or by their own Examples? And is it any Wonder, when these Children come to set up for themselves, and have Families of their own, if they do not pray in their Families, or sanctify the Sabbath, when they knew little of any such thing when they lived with their Parents? Many a damned Wretch will curse the Day of his Birth, for having an *Abab* to his Father, or a *Jezabel* to his Mother \*.

\* See more of this in *Three Letters to a Friend, of Family Religion.* 12<sup>o</sup>.

The Son of a Giant, the Son of a Murderer, the Son of a wicked Woman, and the like Expressions in Scripture, are not only *Reproaches*, but *Reasons* why such Children are no better: for as a good Son makes a joyful Father, so a wicked Parent seldom makes a good Child. An *Abraham* may have an *Ishmael*; and an *Esau* may spring from an *Isaac*; but usually Religious Families are Nurseries of Religion. On the contrary, there is an Entail of Vice and Wickedness in Irreligious Families. In many Cases the Entail may reach even to Doomsday. And then how great is that Wrath which is treasured up from Father to Son, and multiplied on still unto the Day of Wrath? If it be hard to answer for a thousand Sins, how much more for many thousand Souls, that have successively miscarried from Age to Age, by the Negligence or ill Example of wicked Parents?

3. Another Sin observable in *Joram*, was the not consulting God when he was about to engage in a Matter of great Consequence. For when he, and *Jehoshaphat*, and the King of *Edom*, went to War against *Moab*, 2 *Kings* 3. 10. being in a great Strait for want of Water, *Joram* impatiently complains of God, as having brought out three Kings, to destroy them together in the Wilderness. But says *Jehoshaphat*, who then began to bethink himself, *Is there not a Prophet of the Lord, that he may enquire of the Lord for us?* Very good; but this they should have done before: They were now gone seven Days Journey in the Wilderness; that present Strait brought this Neglect to the

Mind.

## No Peace to the Wicked.

Mind of good *Jehoshaphat*. But we do not find *Joram* troubled himself with such Thoughts.

Are not many of you guilty of the like Sin? Do you not undertake great Matters of Moment and Consequence, without asking Counsel of God; as new Relations, new Conditions, new Employments, considerable Voyages or Journies, removal of Habitations to distant Places, &c. without begging God so to direct by his Providence, so to govern and dispose of Inclinations and Hearts, your own and others; that by the Use of your own Reason, and the Advice of Friends, you may make a true Judgment, what is the most rational and Christian Course? Instead of this, you mock God, by praying for his Blessing upon that which you have contrived without him: you leave him only to be the Executioner of your Wills.

4. Impenitent distrustful *Impatience* in a great Exigence and Strait, is another thing observable in this History of *Joram*, 2 Kings 6. 27. compared with 33. When *Samaria* was besieged by *Benhadad* King of *Syria*, and the Inhabitants distressed by Famine, (inasmuch that an Asses Head was sold for 80 pieces of Silver, and a Cab of Pigeons Dung for five;) King *Joram* walks upon the Walls, and a Woman cries to him for Help, saying, *Help, my Lord, O King*. But he rends his Clothes, and falls to curling and raving, *If the Lord do not help thee*, says he, *how or whence should I help thee?* "How shall I help thee? let the Lord help thee; Go and pray to the Lord, as *Elisba* directs, let him help thee; see how ready he is to do so, by suffering Matters to come to this Extremity. And thereupon vows to have the Head of the Prophet, and curseth himself, if he did not effect it that day.

Now consider a little what was the Case of this poor Woman, she demands a sad piece of Justice of him: For the Famine being very sore, two Mothers had agreed and engaged against the Laws of God and Nature, to eat their Sons; to devour their little ones, to reassume into their Bodies the Fruit whereof they had lately been delivered. One of them yielded to have her Son boiled, and eaten; but the other Parent, after she had her part of such a Banquet on her Neighbour's Child, refuses to part with her own, and will not stand to the Bargain. Upon the Repentance of one of them of this Engagement, the other appeals to *Joram*, in the Anguish and Bitterness of her Soul, crying out, *Help, O King*. O the Terror of *Famine*, sharpened with the Anger



Anger of God, as the bitter Fruit of Sin! that will make the tenderest Mother of you all, not only to lay violent Hands on the Fruit of your Womb, but *Teeth* too; and make you eat the Flesh of your little ones, even of an only Son or Daughter. As delicate Women in *Jerusalem*, as any in *London*, for ought I know, were reduced to this, and glad to do it. As we read, Lament. 2. 20. *Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this: Shall the Women eat their Fruit, the Children of a Span long? And Chap. 4. 10. The Hands of the pitiful Women have sodden their own Children, they were their Meat in the Destruction of the Daughter of my People.* This God hath threatned before, *Deut. 28. 57.*

But in this Distress King *Foram* frets against the Lord, and the Prophet *Elisha*; instead of mourning for Sin, he murmurs against God, saying, *Why should I wait upon God any longer? this Evil is of the Lord.* Is it so? For that very Reason ought you to wait. Let me hereby call you to reflect upon what Instances of *Impatience* you have at any time discovered under the smarting Rod of God, either private or publick; and humble your selves this day for such Guilt.

5. As he was impatient under the Afflicting Hand of God; so, when by a wonderful *Deliverance* it was removed, *we do not find he was the better for the Deliverance.* Some kind of Sorrow, it is true, he professed during his Distress, *2 Kings 6. 30. He rent his Clothes, and had Sackcloth within upon his Flesh:* He made some signs of Humiliation, as we do by appearing here this day; but after his Deliverance he was as wicked as before.

Hath it not been thus with us, my Brethren, formerly, when the Hand of God has been against us, when we have been afflicted, chastened, crossed and disappointed, especially when you have been laid on a Bed of Sickness, and brought to the Gates of Death? But God hath delivered you, and raised you up again; wherein are you the better? Are you not as vain and proud as before? Are you not as worldly and earthly-minded as before? as careles, negligent, and remiss, and luke-warm as ever? Is it not so with particular Persons? And is it not so as the Nation in general, after all the late Wonders of Divine Providence in delivering and saving us?

6. Another Sin in the History of *Foram*, was the mingling *Worldly Policy with Religion*; pretending the Service of God, when there was something else designed at the bottom: *2 Kings 3. 2, 3.* compared with *13th*, we read that *that he put away the Image and*

*Statue of Baal*, it may be in Compliance with one of his Allies, viz. to gratify King *Jehosaphat*, whose Assistance he needed against the *Moabites*. But he still cleaves to the *Calves of Dan and Bethel*. Whereupon the Prophet speaks sharply to him in the 13th Verse of that Chapter, *What have I to do with thee, thou King of Israel? Get thee to the Prophets of thy Father and Mother: that is, do not come to me, thy Heart cleaves to Idolatry, tho for a Trick of State thou hast destroyed one of the Images of Baal.*

Christians, if what we do in Religion, in publick or private, be on any carnal Motive, tho the Matter be good; if respect to Friends and Neighbours, or our Credit, or secular Interest, &c. be the principal Inducement; if it be not from the Hatred of Sin, and the Love of God, a Sense of his Authority, and in Obedience to him, God will not accept it, but your Sin shall find you out.

7. *Hypocritical Partiality* in the Service of God, is another Sin to be observed in this History; both Persons in this Text (both *Joram* and *Jehu*) are Instances of it.

*Joram* destroyed one of the Images of *Baal*, *Jehu* was zealous to destroy the House of *Abab*, and the wicked Priests of *Baal*: But both followed the Sin of *Jeroboam* as to the Worship of the Calves, 2 Kings 10. 28, 29. where, after a large Account of this new King *Joram*, and of his Zeal in destroying the Image of *Baal*, and the House of *Baal*, and the Priests of *Baal*, it is added at the 29th Verse, *Howbeit he departed not from the Sins of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin in the Calves of Dan and Bethel*. He was loth to irritate and disoblige his Nobles, and a great part of his new Subjects, who had been long inured to the Worship of the Calves. He durst not trust God to keep the Kingdom safe to him, tho he had had such Experience of his powerful Providence in bringing him to it: He obeyed and followed God, so far as his apprehended Interest would permit him, and no further.

O take heed of Partiality in Religion, of dealing deceitfully with God. You may go a great way, and do many things; and yet if your Hearts are not right with God, if you are not found in his Statutes, and have respect to all his Commandments, he will not accept you.

8. *Instability*, and Unsettledness in that which is good, is another Instance. This was the Case of *Joram*. At one time he calls *Elisha Father*, at another time he vows to have his Head, and

and to be the Death of him, whatever it cost, 2 Kings 6. 21. compared with the 31<sup>st</sup> Verse. Hath it not been so with some of you? Is it not still thus with many? Now for God, and then for *Baal*; warm and cold, off and on, up and down; now convinced, and seemingly resolved for serious Religion; the next Week the World is on the Throne again, or some particular Sin prevails, notwithstanding your Convictions. You ought this day to humble your selves for these things.

III. The Exhortation which remains, shall be to three Duties. *First*, Mourn for the want of Peace, and bewail the Desolations of War which are the Fruits of Sin, and most of all that Sin, which is the Cause of War. *Secondly*, Pray earnestly for the Peace of our *Jerusalem*, and the taking away Sin that hinders all kind of Peace. *Thirdly*, Let your own Personal and Family Repentance and Reformation, show that you are sincere in the two former.

I. Mourn and bewail the want of Peace, and the Desolations of War. There are some of you who have felt the Smart of this War, so as to have reason to mourn on your own Account; tho' little comparatively to others abroad: But we may feel more yet, and we have all reason to mourn for that which is so general a Calamity; and to pity our Brethren whose Country is the Seat of War. We ought to compassionate the thousands of Families that have been undone, and thousands of Souls that have been sent to Hell, by dying in an impenitent State; who have fallen in the high Places of the Field, or been kill'd at Sea, or died in Garisons, or in the Fleet. Let us look abroad into Neighbouring Countries, and we shall find a Roll like that of *Ezekiel*, written within and without, in Capital Letters, *Lamentation, Mourning and Wo*. What Robberies, Spoils, Sackings, Burnings, and Devastations! What Oaths, Blasphemies, Rapes, Cruelty! Desperate Threatnings to stab or pistol those who will not confess their Riches and Treasure, or the little they have hid, to make them accessory to their own Spoils; and afterwards forc'd to wander from their Habitations into Woods, Mountains, Caves, or other places of Shelter, or are carried Captive by the Enemy, and hardly fed with Bread and Water. And after such Miseries, how many of our Brethren have been brought by cruel Usage, to bow down in the House of a strange God, to make Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conscience, and outwardly to yield to Super-

stitution and Idolatry against their Light and Conscience; or been sent to Dungeons, and Gallies, or to more merciful Flames or Gibbets, if they had the Courage to continue faithful. Let us mourn for these things, which I shall represent more largely under another Head. Especially let us mourn for our own, and our Brethrens *Sins*, that are the provoking Cause of these Calamities; without which we should not feel such terrible Effects of God's righteous Anger.

Let us mourn also for the Dishonour of the Christian Name by Bloody Wars, when Christians should be Examples of Peace and Union to the whole World. But the peaceful Name of Christ is blasphemed among Heathens and Infidels by the Wars of Christendom: 'Tis become a Proverb among the Turks, *What! fight and kill one another as the Christians do.*

2. Pray earnestly for the Peace of *Jerusalem*. Earnestly, as those that apprehend the Divine Displeasure, fearing lest Wrath be gone out from the Lord against us: Let us wrestle with him, and strive together in our Prayers, that if it be possible, the Cup may pass from us, and we may turn back an Host of Judgments that seem to be upon their march. Let us pray for Peace with God, for the removal of Sin by Repentance, and pardoning Mercy; and then for Brotherly Peace, and Unity, and Love; and for Civil Peace. But the taking away of *Sin* is the great thing we should beg, as that which is an Enemy to all kind of Peace: Without which, if God should make an end of this War, and give us Peace, and Plenty, and Trade, and all that we could wish of that kind, if his Anger be not turned away from us, but he only say, *Why should you be smitten any more? I will let you alone* - such a Peace, without our Repentance and God's Pardon, would be the most dreadful Judgment. A displeased God may sometimes deliver an unpardon'd People; but it proves not a Blessing, but a Curse to them: For Peace with God is the Foundation of all other Blessings, National or Personal. Let us therefore pray especially for the Pardon of Sin, and Peace with God, and then for Peace in the World, and in the Churches of Christ.

And when you pray for *Peace*, remember to pray for *Truth* with it. There can be no firm, or durable Peace, that is not cemented with Truth. How amiable is it to have *Peace with Truth*! to serve God with Purity and Safety, with Sincerity and Security; to enjoy the Blessings of God's Right-hand and Left together. Without Truth there may be Presumption instead of Peace with

with God; there may be a Combination without Peace, the Colour and Name of an Agreement without Union. Beg that Christ may be advanced, by whom God hath made Peace, and reconciled all things in Heaven and Earth: Where his Truth, Interest, and Authority are left out, or overlook'd, there can be no valuable or lasting Peace.

It is God alone, can ordain and establish Peace for us; can sheath the Sword that is drawn, and make Peace in *Europe*. Any rash or furious Hand can make a Wound, or kindle a Fire; but God only can heal our Breaches, and extinguish the Flames of a Church or State, and bless the World with a happy Peace.

3. Show that you are sincere in mourning and in praying, by your *Personal* and *Family Reformation*. Without resolving and endeavouring this, our solemn Mockery of God in these Solemnities will cost this Nation and City dear. If we confess Sins that we yet love, and resolve not to forsake; if we pretend Desires in Prayer that we have not; if we complain of Burdens that we do not feel; if we spare and cherish any known Lust; if we continue in the neglect of any known Duty, especially what we have been this day minded of; God will be so far from accepting our Fasts and Humiliations, that he will abhor us the more. *Is this the Fast I have chosen?* may God say: "If there be no Reformation, no Divorce between you and your Lusts promoted by it, I am no more pleased, than I should be with your eating and drinking: You might as well have let it alone, and bestowed your time otherwise. Your very Confession of Sins will witness against you, if you do not forsake them. To what purpose is your Mourning and Lamentation, and hanging down the Head for part of a day? *Is it unto me?* saith the Lord. It is not at all unto me except you repent, and turn from your evil Ways. Your Sighs and sad Looks, your Confessions and Deprecations, all your Complaints, and all your Expressions of Sorrow, Mourning, and Humiliation without this, avail nothing; unless your Souls be humbled and broken, unless you abhor your Sins, and loath them, and resolve against them, and henceforward be watchful and diligent in earnest, to overcome and mortify your Lusts, and turn to God, and live to him. O that some may be able to say, that from *this Fast-day* I began to turn to the Lord with all my Heart, and put away the Evil of my doings from before his Eyes. Believe it therefore and consider it, that unless you put away the Evil of your Doings, the Evil that is in your



your Tabernacles, in your Houses, in your Trades, in your Families, &c. you cannot expect Peace. We may go on lamenting one Calamity after another, bewailing this and the other Grievance, and be never the better while we neglect the Cause; while those Lusts and Vices are still reigning, spreading and increasing, which provoke God to plague and punish an unreformed People. If we would be rid of Judgments, or prevent them, we must begin where the Judgment begins. Our Lord knew this, when he saith to the Paralytick who came for Cure of his Disease, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee.*

Let me urge and inforce this, 1. By calling you to consider the Miseries of War, and the Blessings of Peace. Most of us know little what it is to live in a Country that for many Years is the Seat of War; to have a Bloody Enemy at your Gates, or rude Soldiers domineering in your Houses, or to have them pillaged every Week, or laid in Ashes at once; to have your Children wallowing in Blood before your Eyes, Virgins perishing under the Lusts of profligate Villains, Widows mourning for the dead, and hardly daring to show they mourn: To have no Children left to the Father, or Husband to the Wife, or Money to the Rich, or Clothing to the Delicate; and they that were brought up in Scarlet to imbrace Dungbills, weltering in their own Tears, or Blood. You would hardly have Patience to hear the recital of what others have suffered. Look abroad, and consider the Countries round about us; behold and see what sad Characters of Misery and Ruin are engraven, or rather plowed on the Persons, Houses, Fields, Vineyards, Cities, Churches, &c. of our Neighbours.

Yesterday, or a day or two ago, saith one, I and my Family were in Peace and Safety, and had Food and Rayment, Liberty and Plenty; I have now no House to harbour me, no Food to nourish me, or Money to buy it, and hardly Clothes left to cover my Shame and Nakedness. A few days ago I slept quietly in my own House and Bed, but now I have no Place or Pillow, but *Jacob's* Pillow of Stone whereon to lay my Head. My Father is kill'd, or taken Prisoner, saith another, my dear and tender Father, who nourish'd and sustain'd me; and now he is not, or is a miserable Captive, and hath hardly Bread to sustain himself. Or Parents bewail the loss of a beloved Son: My Son, that was the Staff of my Age, the Joy of my Heart, and Stay of my Family, the Comfort of my Life, he is imprisoned by a cruel Oppressor, or he is mortally wounded, or he is dead. The Widow bemoans the loss

of

of a tender Husband, (made nearer by God than Father or Mother) snatcht away by an untimely Death, whom she shall see no more. So the Brother, the Kinsman, the Neighbour, the Friend, each lamenting the Desolation the Sword hath made.

Let us mix Thankfulness to God for our selves, with our Pity and Compassion, and Mourning, for the Calamities of others, who have hitherto suffered more than we. We do not hear the Voice of the Spoiler in our Borders: We hear not the murdering Pieces about our Ears. We see not our Houses, and Churches, and Places of publick Worship flaming over our Heads. We do not behold our pleasant and beautiful Dwellings in Ashes, where we traded, feasted, and slept in Peace; nor are turn'd out to the Streets or Fields for Shelter, not knowing where to look for Security for our selves or nearest Relations; seeing some of them slain before our Eyes, or not knowing where they are, whether alive or dead; hearing the confused Out-cries and Skrieks of our distressed Neighbours, mingled with the Noise of French or Irish Souldiers killing, or encouraging to kill. You have not seen tender Babes snatcht from the Breasts of their Mothers, bleeding on the Stones, or sprawling and struggling for Life on the Souldiers Pikes, (and the distressed Mother ravish'd it may be, e're she have leave to die.) You have not seen the ghastly Visage of Death, deform'd with Wounds, and Men and Horses wallowing in their mangled Blood; and the amazed helpless People, running to and fro to escape, but know not how or whither. Others have seen and known such tragical Effects of War; let us mourn for them, and let us be thankful, that as yet we do not. Let us improve the Day of our Visitation, our Civil and Religious Liberty, lest the things of our Peace should be hid from our Eyes.

2. Consider, that it is *God alone* that can give Peace: Our Business is with God in order to an happy Issue of this War. It is he must prevent, or conclude and shorten the Miseries of War. He that is *the Lord of Hosts*, who makes Wars to cease to the Ends of the Earth, He must make our Officers Peace: He that works all our Works for us, must ordain Peace for us, that Violence shall no more be heard. It is He that strengthens the Bars of our Gates, and makes Peace in our Borders, and feeds us with *Plal. 147* the finest of the Wheat. It is He who keeps our City, and guards *14* our Island, and can prosper our Fleet and Armies. He turns Swords into Plow-shares, and Spears into Pruning-hooks, and sheaths the Sword when it hath done his Work. It is by the  
 Restraint

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Restraint of his Providence, that the Inhabitants of the Earth learn War no more.

He sits upon the Floods, and stills the Waves, and sets Bounds to the Raging of the Sea, to the Lusts of Princes, and to the Tumults of the People. He can take the Obstacles of Peace out of the way, when we expect it not. He hurles Princes from their Thrones, and sets up others in their room. He breaks their Scepters in pieces, as easily as you can a *Venice-Glass*. He overrules their Designs; he can change their Counsels, break their Measures, blast their Power, shame their Confidence, lessen their Numbers, and frustrate their Hopes. When God was displeased with *Israel* for the accursed Thing in the time of *Joshua*, three thousand *Israelites* shall flee, and be smitten before the Men of *Ai*, though but thirty six in number. But if God be our Friend, though ten thousand of the People set themselves against us, we need not fear. He is a sufficient Defence; we need not fear all the Nations of the Earth, if we are at Peace with God, and at Peace among our selves, which would follow upon it. He is the Shield of our Help; and can be a Wall of Fire round about us. Tho' the Enemy come in like a Flood, he can lift up a Standard against him; and when he comes *one way*, make him fly *ten*. He can show Strength with his Arm, and scatter the Proud in the Imagination of their Hearts, and turn their Devices backward. What deep Designs does he defeat? What mighty Projects does he disappoint, by taking away Wisdom from the Wise, and Courage from the Valiant; cutting off the Spirits of Princes by a surprizing Stroke, altering their Minds and Purposes, or ending their Lives? &c. Peace and War are in his Hand. All the Hosts of Heaven are at his Command and Service; to fight his Battels, and accomplish his Designs. The Stars in their Courses shall fight, and the Elements of Heaven shall be muster'd in his Quarrel. From the Air he can pour down Hail-stones, as on the *Ammonites*: or send an Angel to discomfit a mighty Army, as he did *Senacherib's*: or by Fire consume an Enemy's Troops, as those which came against *Elijah*. The Water shall bury the *Egyptians*; and rather than fail, the Dust of the Earth shall start up into Armies of Flies and Lice and Frogs against *Pharaoh*.

And he is the God of Peace, as well as the Lord of Hosts: As 'twas of the Lord, that the *Canaanites* did not make Peace with *Israel*; and that *Zedekiah* rebelled, and that *Abah* went to War at *Ramoth Gilead*, &c. So 'tis he that makes Peace; *I make Peace,*



*I create Evil, I the Lord do all these things* He is said to make *Iſa.* 45. 7. the Instruments of War, to create the Smith that formeth them, and to create the Waster to destroy. Therefore he can stop *Iſa.* 54. 16. them, hinder them, destroy them when he pleaseth. To all the Ends of the Earth, he is said to make Wars to cease; that is, in *Pſal.* 46. 8. all Places, in all Countries, in all Societies, in Families, in Churches, in Cities, in Nations, in particular Souls. Every where it is his Work to make Peace; and every kind of Peace is from the God of Peace.

3. If God be angry, and bring desolating War on a People, Human Help is all in vain, and his Anger will make all the Calamities of War to be double. If *Israel* become the People of God's Wrath, he lets loose the Rage of Man; and then every base, proud, idolatrous *Assyrian* shall tread them down as Mire in the Streets. Even *Sampson* shall fall by the uncircumcised Philistines, when God departs, whereas before he was wont to slaughter them by Heaps. If God be angry, and send this Judgment of Sword or Famine against a People, who can describe the Dread and Horror of such a Calamity? Every Battel of the Warrior, saith the Prophet, is with confused Noise, and Garments roll'd in Blood; but this shall be with Burning and with Fewel of Fire. The Wrath of God shall put an unusual Terror on the very Countenances of an Enemy, and give an unusual Edg to their Sword. The Anger of God will sharpen the Sting and Terror of natural Death, it will in-venom the Teeth of Famine, and make all the Calamities of War unsufferably more grievous than can be exprest.

There is nothing so base, but the greatest Spirits shall stoop to; nothing so unnatural, but the tenderest of you all may be brought to comply with. You think you should part with your own Lives a thousand times over, rather than eat the Flesh of your Children: I doubt not but the delicate Women in *Jerusalem* thought so too; and yet in Famine, they boiled their Children, and were glad to eat them. Pity shall perish from Parents, Courage from the Men of Might, Wisdom from the Antients, Flight from the Swift, and the Strong not be able to find their Hands: For it is the Day of the Lord's Wrath, and who can abide it? You may seek for Death at such a time, and not find it; and within an Hour, Death may offer it self, and then you will flee from it; and within a few Moments repent, and wish you had died. Such will be the Distress and Anguish of your Souls, between vain Hope and tormenting Fear, that your very Lives will be a burden. Think what the case would be,

where the Sword without, and Terror within shall destroy young and old, the Suckling, and the Man with gray Hairs. When there is no Peace to him that goes out, or to him that comes in, but great Vexation on all the Inhabitants; Nations destroyed of Nation, and City of City: for God did vex them with all Adversity. Think of these things, and repent of Sin, for that is the Cause of it.

4. We do not know what we may further experience and feel of the terrible Effects and Miseries of War. The most are confident that all will quickly be well, and the present Cloud vanish: There will speedily be an honourable Peace; the French are impoverished and almost starved: Their Numbers are lessened, and ours increased against this Campaign. They must ere long make Peace, or we shall force them to it: Or if they should not, many flatter themselves, they have this or the other Project to provide for themselves; they doubt not, for their parts, but to escape well, let things be as they will. But may not all such Confidence prove a Refuge of Lies? Consider what God saith by the Prophet, *Thus saith the Lord to the King of Judah, Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall depart: tho you had smitten the whole Army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remain'd but wounded Men among them, yet should they rise up every Man from his Tent, and burn this City with Fire.*

What is there for publick Safety, or private Defence, that can be Proof against the Anger of God? For certain, it is not the great Numbers or Riches of a People, no advantageous Situation or Strength of Places, nor the best prepared Armies and Navies, or any Confederacies abroad, or Fortifications at home, can secure us. The best, the greatest, the most hopeful of all such things have been frequently baffled, and sham'd, and confounded by the Divine Anger. Riches be sure profit not in the day of Evil; they rather expose to Envy and Danger, than secure against it: They who have most to lose are likely to suffer most, and commonly are least able to bear it. God hath hitherto saved us with a *nevertheless*, notwithstanding our Provocations; it may be He will be intreated to do so still: But who can tell, but that *except we Repent, we shall drink the Dregs of the Cup*? The Sins of Societies and Communities of Men, as such, must be punish'd in this World, if at all; and therefore tho a single wicked Man may escape the Judgment of God in this Life, it cannot be expected for a sinful Nation without Repentance: And the Danger is proportionably great, according to the heinous Nature and Aggravations of National Sins.

5. Unless

5. Unless by Repentance we make Peace with God, what a poor inconsiderable thing is the *Civil Peace* of the Nation, as to us in particular? How little a thing is it to have Peace round about; if we have not Peace above, and Peace within? While thou art unreconciled to God, thou hast greater Matters to be concerned for, than what refers to the National Welfare. How little doth it signify to *Thee*, what Changes are made in the Thrones of Princes, or what are the Successes of War; who is exalted and who brought down, while thy Sin is unpardoned, while God is thine Enemy, while the Curses of his Law are in force against thee, while his Wrath hangs over thy Head, and thou mayst drop into Hell the next Night, or the next Hour? Thou must shortly die. Man, and be damned, and perish for ever, if thou art not at Peace with God.

But I expect many will say, "I hope I am at Peace with God, for I have inward Peace; my Conscience is quiet, I hope all is well. Let me therefore ask you,

1. *Are you willing to have the Grounds of your Peace tried and examined?* or, are you loth to bring it to the Touch-stone? You may justly suspect that Peace which is afraid of being examined, as to the Ground and Foundation of it. Since therefore thou sayst thou hast *Peace*, enquire seriously, Is it on a Scripture-Bottom? Is it warranted by the Rule? Is it according to the Infallible Word of God? Hast thou Peace, by the Testimony of Conscience to thine unfeigned Repentance, and Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him? Doth the Gospel speak Peace to thee, according to the Tenor and Terms of the new Covenant?

2. Thou sayst thou hast Peace, *How camest thou by it?* Is it the Effect of deep Repentance and Sorrow for Sin? Is it the Fruit of a Divine Faith, accepting Christ in all his Offices? Is it the Answer of fervent Prayer, after earnest Supplications to Heaven? Is it the Result of serious Examination of thy Heart and Life? If thou didst not get it in the use of such Means, there is reason to question the Truth of it. True well-grounded Peace is the Fruit of holy Diligence in the Exercise of Grace, and is neither got nor kept by Sloth and Idleness. That Peace which grows upon us we know not how, and is kept by Negligence, without Prayer and without Pains, is a dangerous Presumption.

3. Thou sayst thou hast Peace; let me ask thee, *how long hast thou had it?* It may be thou hast *always* had this Peace, but it is very suspicious, if it were never preceded by any Trouble. Thou art pleased that thy Conscience is quiet, but it was never otherwise; thou never hadst any true sight of Sin to trouble thee. Thy Heart is whole, thou thinkest, but it was never broken: Thou believest thy Sins are pardoned; but if thou didst always believe so, 'tis to be feared thou wert never Penitent.

Consider

## No Peace to the Wicked.

Consider how long thou hast had this Peace, and whether God hath ever preceded.

4. *What are the Effects of thy Peace of Conscience?* Doth it make thee more careful to avoid Sin? Doth it quicken and enliven thee in the Will of the Lord? A false Peace makes us more sluggish, and secure, and barren. Does thy Peace engage thee to walk humbly with God, in a thankful Admiration of his Grace, and a more entire Devotedness to him? Otherwise it is not of the right-kind, and will not last. Is thy Peace the same, tho thou hast lately fallen into Sin, and yielded to Temptation? Are the solemn Duties of Religion, Prayer, Word, and Sacraments, as easy and delightful to thee, notwithstanding such Sins, as at other times? A good Man hath not the same Peace and Quiet, when Corruption prevails, and he is overcome by Temptation, as at other times; till upon renewed Repentance, and Faith in Christ, he can hope his Sin is forgiven, and God reconciled. And the more hope he hath of this, to pacify and quiet Conscience, the more diligent, humble, watchful, careful he will be to please God, and keep himself unspotted from the World.

To shut up all; Be persuaded to turn from Sin, which is the great Obstacle of Peace. There is yet Hope, if you will do so. The Answer to this Text to the Question, *Is it Peace?* does not destroy all Hope of it; *What Peace, so long as the Whoredoms?* &c. doth imply that there may be Peace, and there shall be, if these be removed. Therefore tho our Dangers be great, and our Fears justly great too, yet our Case is not desperate. Tho our Breaches be wide as the Sea, and our Wounds are deep, and our Case doubtful, yet is there Hope in Israel concerning us. The Course taken this Day, if seriously engaged in, and generally so, may yet obtain National Mercy, a good Issue of this War, and the Prevention of farther Judgments; the healing of our Breaches, and the establishing of us on sure and lasting Foundations.

However, if we resolve and endeavour, every one for our own parts, as to our selves and Families, to comply with our Duty, and obey this Call and Counsel of God; I may then conclude with a Blessing, the comprehensive Blessing of Peace; I may beg it of God in hope, saying, *Peace be in your Families, Peace in your Neighbourhood, Peace in this City and Nation, and for the Nations round about us, and among all the Reformed Churches, with an abundant Blessing of the Gospel of Peace. And the Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, establish and keep your Minds and Hearts in the Knowledge and Love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* To whom be Glory throughout all the Churches for ever. Amen.

F I N I S.